



Disaster and Emergency Management Resources

Maintaining Livestock Health After a Flood

Disease Control

- Where large numbers of animals are assembled, watch for any indication of infectious diseases such as pneumonia, foot rot, or leptospirosis. These diseases are more likely to occur where cattle are crowded on wet ground and where horn flies and houseflies are abundant.
- Promptly report any sign of disease to a local, state, or federal veterinarian.
- Contact a veterinarian about vaccinating animals for immunity from flood-related diseases such as anthrax, blackleg, and swine erysipelas.

Feed and Water

- Provide clean, uncontaminated water.
- Inspect feeds such as corn, wheat, and hay. Do not feed flood-damaged or moldy hay unless it has been tested for mycotoxins, toxic substances produced by fungi.
- Do not use any feed or forage that may have been contaminated by chemicals or pesticides.

Pastureland

- Lack of adequate forage could force animals to eat poisonous plants. Remove fallen wild cherry limbs from pastures to prevent livestock poisoning.
- Before restocking flooded pastures, remove debris, especially along fence lines and in corners. Livestock could be injured from pieces of barbed wire, sharp metal, and trash.

Protecting Dairy Cows

- Clean and sanitize milking parlor, dairy barn, and equipment before resuming normal use.
- Try to milk at regular times. It is better to lose the milk from one milking than to stress high-producing cows.

- If feed supplies are limited, give the largest portion of available feed to the highest-producing cows and those recently fresh. This may be a good time to cull the herd.
- Watch for signs of mastitis, which is likely to flare up if milking methods, time, and equipment have been changed.

Sanitation

- Clean out and spray farm buildings with a good disinfectant before animals occupy them again. Air buildings thoroughly to dry them out. Scrub the milk house and equipment with detergent and hot water. Sanitize equipment, walls, ceilings and floors with dairy sanitizer equipment.
- Dispose of animal carcasses promptly. If there is no rendering company operating nearby, burn or bury carcasses deeply in a place approved by your local soil conservation office.
- Mosquitoes and other pests may be abundant after a flood. They not only annoy animals, but some species carry disease. Spray animals with an insect repellent as recommended by your county Extension agent.

Adapted from resource material developed by the University of Florida Extension Service entitled “The Disaster Handbook” and the University of Wisconsin Extension Service entitled “The Disaster Handbook for Extension Agents”